

January 09, 2020 12:09 PM

Henry Ford Health top marketing officer out; he filed discrimination lawsuit against ex-employer

JAY GREENE



REPRINTS

- David Duvall reportedly did not tell Henry Ford he had been terminated from prior job in North Carolina
- He filed discrimination lawsuit against former employer two months ago, saying he was fired for being white
- Duvall oversaw communications and marketing departments



Henry Ford Health System

David Duvall

David Duvall, who was hired last year as Henry Ford Health System's senior vice president, chief marketing, communications and experience officer, was terminated earlier this week, Crain's has learned.

Officials for Henry Ford confirmed that Duvall is no longer with the Detroit-based health system. Spokesman Brenda Craig said Duvall left the system "effective immediately." She declined to provide further information.

Duvall, a nationally recognized marketing and change-management executive, was hired in April and joined the six-hospital system in June.

Two sources familiar with the situation, who asked to remain anonymous, said Henry Ford was unaware Duvall was fired from his previous job at Novant Health Inc. in Charlotte, N.C., which he held for nearly five years.

In November, Duvall filed a wrongful discharge lawsuit against Novant, claiming he was terminated based on reverse discrimination because he is white. He was reportedly replaced with two minority executives, according to a report in the [Charlotte Observer](#).

"Novant fired plaintiff without warning or cause as part of an intentional campaign to promote diversity in its management ranks; a campaign it has boasted about publicly," the Observer quoted the lawsuit as saying.

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Sources told Crain's that Henry Ford CEO Wright Lassiter III apologized Tuesday to the departments that Duvall oversaw for the hiring.

Despite working for Henry Ford for nearly six months, Duvall filed the lawsuit against Novant because he "suffered the humiliation of being abruptly terminated because of his race and gender," according to the lawsuit. The lawsuit seeks reinstatement with full back pay and lost benefits or full back pay, benefits and front pay without reinstatement, the Observer reported.

Duvall did not respond to a request for comment via LinkedIn and could not be otherwise reached.

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MODERN HEALTHCARE: January 10, 2020

01:13 PM Henry Ford Health top marketing officer out; he filed discrimination lawsuit against ex-employer Jay Greene

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BECKERS HOSPITAL REVIEW: Henry Ford Health System parts ways with marketing chief

Kelly Gooch - Friday, January 10th, 2020 [Print](#) | [Email](#)

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David Duvall is no longer employed by Detroit-based Henry Ford Health System as senior vice president,

chief marketing, communications and experience officer, a health system spokesperson confirmed.

Health system spokesperson Brenda Craig said Mr. Duvall, who began his employment with Henry Ford in June 2019, is no longer with Henry Ford. However, she declined to provide any other details. Henry Ford has not named his replacement.

[Crain's Detroit Business](#) reports that Mr. Duvall was fired earlier this week and was responsible for the six-hospital system's communications and marketing departments.

Before joining Henry Ford, Mr. Duvall was senior vice president of marketing and communications for Charlotte, N.C.-based Novant Health. Novant fired Mr. Duvall, who subsequently sued the health system in November, alleging Novant fired him based on reverse discrimination, according to [The Charlotte Observer](#).

The lawsuit alleges that Novant replaced Mr. Duvall, a white male, with two minority hires "without warning or cause as part of an intentional campaign to promote diversity in its management ranks," the *Observer* reports. In November, Novant declined to comment specifically to the *Observer* about the lawsuit, citing corporate policy, but said the health

system "will defend itself vigorously against these claims."

Two sources familiar with Mr. Duvall's situation at Henry Ford, who requested anonymity, told *Crain's* Henry Ford was unaware that Novant fired Mr. Duvall.

Mr. Duvall did not respond to a request from *Crain's* for comment.

Read the full report [here](#).

[Crain's Detroit Business](#)

January 9 ·

David Duvall reportedly did not tell Henry Ford he had been terminated from prior job in North Carolina.

Health care executive says he was fired because he's white, North Carolina suit says

[BY HAYLEY FOWLER](#)

NOVEMBER 20, 2019 01:50 PM

A former marketing executive said North Carolina-based Novant discriminated against him when they replaced him with two minority hires as part of a diversity push in management, according to a federal lawsuit. *GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO*

A former marketing executive says the decision to fire him from a multi-state healthcare provider in North Carolina was reverse discrimination, according to a lawsuit filed Monday.

Novant Health Inc. terminated Senior Vice President of Marketing and Communications David Duvall — who is a white male — from his position last year and replaced him with two minority hires, according to the complaint.

“Novant fired plaintiff without warning or cause as part of an intentional campaign to promote diversity in its management ranks; a campaign it has boasted about publicly,” the suit states.

Novant primarily serves North and South Carolina, Virginia and Georgia. In 2018, it operated on [\\$4.99 billion in revenue](#) with a net income of \$94 million, its website states.

It also boasts [one of the largest medical centers](#) in the country out of Winston-Salem, according to Becker’s Hospital Review. At the time of Duvall’s firing, the healthcare provider reportedly employed nearly 30,000 employees.

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Kati Everett, chief communications officer for Novant, told McClatchy news group in a statement Wednesday the company is aware of the allegations.

“Due to corporate policy, we cannot comment specifically on this legal matter, except to say that Novant Health will defend itself vigorously against these claims,” she said.

Counsel for Duvall declined to comment.

Duvall joined Novant in 2013 and worked out of offices in Mecklenburg County, according to the suit.

During his nearly five-year tenure, the complaint says Duvall’s superiors gave him “strong” evaluations and his team consistently had “a high level of workplace satisfaction.”

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VIEW OFFER

He was also reportedly on various committees and councils at Novant and received “industry-wide recognition and awards” for his marketing projects, according to the suit.

But days before Duvall's five-year anniversary with the company — when he would have been eligible for longer severance pay and benefits as well as 1.5 times the bonus he received the year prior — he was fired without reason and sent “off the premises immediately,” the complaint states.

His supervisor reportedly told him it had “nothing to do with (Duvall's) performance” and he had “done everything asked of him and more.”

“Plaintiff was so productive that Novant split his duties between two separate positions, promoting one of plaintiff's direct reports, a white female, into a new role of Chief Communications Officer, and hiring a black female as the leader of Marketing,” the suit states.

At least five other white male executives — including the chief legal officer, medical group president, chief information officer, patient experience officer and president of Haymarket Medical Center — were also reportedly fired.

All were “replaced by either a racial minority and/or female in a period of 12 to 18 months,” according to the complaint.

“While the goal of achieving diversity in leadership has recognized value, terminating high performing employees with no justification or purpose other than to achieve diversity constitutes an adverse employment action based on race and/or gender,” the suit states.

Duvall was without work for a year, during which time the complaint states he “lost the severance pay of 18 months of base pay and 1.5 times his prior bonus” and more than \$200,000 in retirement benefits. He also had to pay out of pocket for health insurance.

He was [hired earlier this year](#) as the senior vice president and chief marketing, communications and experience officer with Henry Ford Health System in Michigan, according to a press release.

But he “suffered the humiliation of being abruptly terminated because of his race and gender,” according to the suit.

As a result, the complaint makes claims for employment discrimination on the basis of race and sex under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act as well as wrongful discharge.

Duvall is seeking reinstatement with full back pay and lost benefits or full back pay, benefits and front pay without reinstatement.

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A former Novant Health executive is suing the health system for wrongful termination and discrimination — he says he was fired to help the organization reach diversity goals, reports The Charlotte Observer . The lawsuit, filed Nov. 18, alleges **David Duvall** , former senior vice president of marketing and communications, was fired in 2018 without warning just before his five-year anniversary at the Winston-Salem, N.C.-based health system, despite receiving good ...

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... the decision to fire him from a multi-state healthcare provider in North Carolina was reverse discrimination, according to a lawsuit filed Monday. Novant Health Inc. terminated Senior Vice President of Marketing and Communications **David Duvall** — who is a white male — from his position last year and replaced him with two minority hires, according to the complaint. "Novant fired plaintiff without warning or cause as part of an intentional campaign ...

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